CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.721
23 January 1996

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Tuesday, 23 January 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: U Aye (Myanmar)

GE.96-60290 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 721st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament and the first part of the 1996 session.

At the outset, I should like to extend a warm welcome to the newly appointed Permanent Representatives of Cuba, Ambassador Caballero Rodríguez; of Kenya, Ambassador Tolle; and of Nigeria, Ambassador Abuah; and assure them of our full support and cooperation in their new assignments. I should also like to take this opportunity to welcome, once again, Mr. John Holum, Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, who will be addressing the Conference this morning. I am sure as in the past, his statement will be followed with great interest.

It is a great honour and a privilege for me to assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at an important juncture during the beginning of its 1996 session. My task has been made easier, thanks to the efforts of my predecessors, in particular Ambassador Benjelloun of Morocco.

1995 was a landmark year in the field of arms limitation and disarmament. It marked significant events and anniversaries, i.e. the fiftieth year of the use of nuclear weapons and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the NPT. It also witnessed the following important developments relating to arms limitation and disarmament: the indefinite extension of the NPT and the adoption by the NPT Conference of principles and objectives on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament measures; the signing of the Southeast Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone Treaty by the heads of State or Government of the seven ASEAN member States as well as Cambodia, Laos and my own country, Myanmar, at Bangkok on 15 December 1995; the finalization and completion of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty); and the adoption by the historic fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly of some important resolutions, which include resolution, 50/65 "Comprehensive nuclear-test-ban-treaty", and resolution 50/70 P, "Nuclear disarmament".

Geographical limitation of the spread of nuclear weapons in the form of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones constitutes an effective means of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The current trend toward the creation of increasing numbers of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world is most encouraging. The signing of the Southeast Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone Treaty by the heads of State or Government of seven ASEAN member States, together with Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar at Bangkok on 15 December 1995 can accordingly be deemed to be yet another significant and welcome development in this direction.

Emergence of a NWFZ in South-East Asia upon entry into force of the Treaty will constitute a crucial building block in the creation of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in our region of Asia. Such a development will undoubtedly contribute to peace and security of the region and to the strengthening of international security. As a South-East Asian nation and a signatory of the Treaty, Myanmar will exert all necessary efforts and join with our South-East Asian neighbours in our endeavour to achieve this common aspiration.

(The President)

1996 is a year of vast opportunities and challenges in the field of arms limitation and disarmament. The window of opportunity is open for the completion of the final text of the CTBT at an early date in 1996, in keeping with the objective set out in resolution 50/65 of the fiftieth United Nations General Assembly. However, due to the rapidly evolving international situation, this window of opportunity will remain open for us only for a limited time, and then pass us by. I need hardly mention that it remains essential for the CD to take timely and fruitful advantage of this opportunity offered to us.

Accordingly, it is imperative that the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban be re-established at this very first plenary meeting today, and the Committee commence its work immediately. It is incumbent upon all of us to collectively endeavour to resolve the outstanding issues in a spirit of flexibility and accommodation in order that we may produce a clean final text of the draft treaty during the first half of the year. The entire international community is looking to the CD to finalize the work of the CTBT in good time this year, and we must not fail in this crucial responsibility.

One of the most important resolutions adopted by the historic fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly was resolution 50/70 P on "Nuclear disarmament". This resolution is to date the most substantive resolution dealing with nuclear disarmament ever adopted by the General Assembly, by a majority of 106 votes in favour to 39 against with 17 abstentions. Myanmar, together with 32 other co-sponsors, took an active part in drafting the resolution and in seeing it through to its adoption by the General Assembly.

The resolution, inter alia, urges the nuclear-weapon States to stop immediately the qualitative improvement, development, stockpiling and production of nuclear warheads and their delivery vehicles; calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to undertake a step-be-step reduction of the nuclear threat and a phased programme of progressive and balanced deep reductions of nuclear weapons, and to carry out effective nuclear disarmament measures with a view to the total elimination of these weapons within a time-bound framework; and also calls upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations early in 1996 on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and for the eventual elimination of these weapons within a time-bound framework.

Bearing in mind the terms of this milestone resolution, we should intensify our efforts in the CD with a view to developing a basis for consensus on this issue.

The CD established the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prohibition of the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons or other Nuclear Explosive Devices on 23 March last year. However, the Ad Hoc Committee has not been able to function during the 1995 session. In view of the importance of the subject, we should not fail to redouble our efforts and achieve substantive progress on this issue.

(The President)

Security assurances for non-nuclear weapon States is a long-standing question that merits high priority on our disarmament agenda. The 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, in its decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, recognized that further steps needed to be taken that could take the form of a legally binding instrument. It is imperative that we intensify our efforts to make progress on this high-priority issue.

Outer space must ideally be an environment for peaceful activities and be free of any measures toward its armament. Prevention of an arms race in outer space should rightly be kept on the active agenda of the CD.

An urgent question that demands the attention of the CD in a most expeditious and effective manner is that of expansion of its membership. The current composition of the CD no longer reflects the realities of the present-day world. Requests for CD membership by members of the G.23 and others deserve our serious attention and our determined efforts to resolve this impasse. The decision of the CD contained in document CD/1356 must necessarily be implemented at the earliest possible date, and further steps taken to review its membership periodically as required by the rules of procedure. As the President of the CD, I strongly deem it to be my responsibility to intensify consultations with a view to resolving this question.

This is indeed a critical moment for the CD, and time is opportune to inquire what the CD should be engaged in after the anticipated completion of the CTBT negotiations. And in this exercise, even the CD agenda itself is due for a thorough review, in view of the growing importance assumed by questions such as nuclear disarmament, as earlier mentioned. Transparency in armaments is a relatively new issue, and we need to take a more careful look at it, to identify a suitable subject in this regard for consideration in the CD. Prevention of nuclear war in the present-day context seems to have become too vague and general. Non-use of nuclear weapons may be a more precise identification of the issue suitable for negotiations in the CD. These are but a few thoughts on the future agenda of the CD. Hence the necessity for us to appoint a special coordinator with the responsibility to hold consultations on the review of the agenda of the CD.

In the post-cold-war era, the CD continues to be entrusted with a distinct and constructive role as the sole multilateral negotiating body dealing with disarmament. Past experience has demonstrated that the CD has been able to rise up and be responsive to the challenging demands of changed circumstances. It is our earnest hope that the CD will continue to provide the necessary answers to arms limitation and disarmament questions of the present and the future.

I know that I can count on your full support and cooperation in the discharge of my responsibilities, as well as on the hard work and dedication of the secretariat team under the leadership of Secretary-General Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky.

(The President)

The intensive consultations we have held on the organization of the 1996 session of the Conference have led me to believe that we will be able to undertake substantive work immediately. Once we have heard the speakers inscribed on the list in the plenary today, I shall invite the Conference to examine rapidly, in an informal meeting, the draft agenda for the 1996 session and the draft decision on the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. I shall also inform you of the remarks I intend to make on how to deal with the other issues on the agenda of the Conference. At the same informal meeting, I intend to take up the requests for participation by non-member States of the Conference in our work during this session, which the secretariat has distributed at the beginning of this meeting. Immediately afterwards, I shall resume the plenary meeting to formalize agreements reached in the informal meeting.

I should now like to call on Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to read to us a message addressed to the Conference by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, as well as to inform us on the resources allocated to the Conference for its current session. Mr. Petrovsky, you have the floor, Sir.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): It is indeed a great privilege for me to read the following message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to the Conference on Disarmament. I quote:

"It gives me great pleasure to greet the opening of your annual session. 1996 will be a significant year in our effort to make the world a safer place.

"1995 brought the historic decision by the international community to consolidate and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons takes us forward in our collective search for a world of shared peace and security. But there is still much room for further progress in the nuclear field.

"The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the availability of their basic components constitute a threat to international peace and security. This threat has not abated. In some ways, it is growing. A coordinated response by the international community is essential. This makes vital the early entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction have stepped up their quest for a regime for the verification of compliance with its obligations. This sense of urgency and determination is encouraging.

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

"A Protocol on the prohibition of the use of laser weapons designed to cause permanent blindness has been successfully negotiated. Progress has been made in the field of land-mines as a whole. The Organization of African Unity has adopted a Treaty on the denuclearization of the African continent. The path paved at Tlatelolco and Rarotonga has been extended. Ongoing, intensive efforts are continuing in South-East Asia and the Middle East in this direction.

"This general strengthening of non-proliferation regimes is being furthered by measures undertaken by the United States, the Russian Federation and countries in Europe in elaborating new security arrangements to replace the bipolar cold war system. We have witnessed the reduction of strategic nuclear warheads resulting from the START process. The security dialogue within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) framework is continuing. A new approach to collective security based on dialogue and cooperation is emerging. It must be sustained and enhanced and become truly universal.

"The Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum in this multifaceted effort. New opportunities bring you fresh responsibilities. Commitments have been undertaken at the NPT Review and Extension Conference. The fiftieth session of the General Assembly has adopted by consensus a resolution relevant in this regard. Our energies must now focus on the conclusion of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

"Important initiatives have recently been taken with respect to its scope. Considerable progress has been achieved in the negotiations during 1995. Given a further convergence of views, substantive progress can be made in other important areas such as verification and conditions for entry into force. Commitments have been made to conclude and sign the treaty this year. Nothing must be allowed to deter this objective.

"There are other important issues on the international disarmament agenda. These will merit your time and deliberation.

"In conformity with the decision you took last year, which was strengthened by the commitment undertaken at the NPT Review and Extension Conference, the international community has hopes for early successful negotiations on a non-discriminatory and verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The committee you have decided to establish will have an important negotiating mandate. Substantive work can begin on this important step toward non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

"In light of the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 984 and declarations by the nuclear-weapon States concerning both negative and positive security assurances, this issue also must be carefully

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

considered. Transforming these unilateral declarations into a legally binding international instrument would help allay the many understandable concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States.

"The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has proved the feasibility of the concept of transparency in armaments and offers a practical example of cooperation within the international community. Today, almost all types of weapons can be easily acquired. Illicit arms trade is a serious threat to national and international security and a factor that destabilizes States.

"Transparency in armaments is therefore even more urgent. It can open new avenues in addressing conventional arms control by enhancing trust and confidence among States. Your Conference has accumulated experience in this field. You must continue to address this issue and create the conditions conducive to arms reduction at the regional and global levels.

"This is an onerous responsibility. But given this Conference's record of determination, expertise and wisdom, the international community has every reason to look toward your endeavour with confidence and hope.

"As the heads of State and Government declared on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, 'The speed and extent of change in today's world point to a future of great complexity and challenge and to a sharp increase in the level of expectations of the United Nations'. This level will be particularly high in respect of bodies such as this, mandated to fulfil the most basic and critical purpose and principle of the United Nations: a world which will not know, or fear, the scourge of war.

"I wish you success."

While I have the floor, I should like to inform the Conference on the resources allocated to it this year.

As you know, the secretariat is mandated by the General Assembly to report to the Conference on the services to be assigned to it during the 1996 session. As in previous sessions, the Conference will be allocated 10 meetings per week with full services, and 15 meetings per week with full services during the sessions of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events. In other words, we should be able to hold two daily meetings with full services throughout the whole of the 1996 session, plus one additional daily meeting when the seismic Group is in session.

I am sure you are all aware that the United Nations continues to face a serious financial crisis. In these circumstances, it is essential that the

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

Conference makes the best possible use of the resources allocated to it. The Conference has, in the past, shown great flexibility in using the time allocated to it and I am sure that this will be the case this year, especially in view of the intensification of the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Permit me to remind you again, that punctuality in starting meetings is very important and that, as usual, meetings with full services cannot be held in the evenings or during weekends.

The situation with regard to documentation in the United Nations continues to be a source of serious concern, and the capacity of Conference Services to process documents in a timely manner is being constantly eroded. I wish to recall, again, that the measures accepted by the Conference at the informal meeting held on 22 April 1986 concerning savings in documentation continue to be valid. In order to implement these decisions, all documents need to be presented well in advance and duplication of documentation should be avoided. I am sure I can count on your cooperation in exercising every restraint, wherever possible, in the control of documentation.

I would also like to remind delegations to submit as soon as possible their letters of accreditation so that we may issue passes granting access to the Conference rooms, as well as the list of participants. Delegatees are kindly requested to carry with them either their CD passes or at least the identification provided by the United Nations Office at Geneva.

The Conference will continue to have at its disposal the Council Chamber, room I, room C-108, room III and the secretariat conference room on the sixth floor. When delegations need such facilities for their consultations, I would ask that they coordinate their requests through the secretariat.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for conveying the message from Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali and for the information he has provided on the resources allocated to the Conference. I would ask Mr. Petrovsky to be kind enough to convey to the Secretary-General of the United Nations our appreciation for his contribution and the importance he attaches to our work.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has also sent me a communication transmitting all the resolutions on disarmament and international security matters adopted by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, including those addressing specific requests to the Conference. This communication has been distributed by the secretariat as document CD/1377.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Pakistan, the United States of America, Peru (who will speak on behalf of the Group of 21) and Romania. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Please accept the warm felicitations of the Pakistan delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are most happy to see the representative of friendly Myanmar occupy the presidency of this Conference. Your skilful handling of the delicate consultations preceding this important session of the Conference has impressed us deeply. We are confident that under your able leadership, the Conference will lose no time in meeting a historic challenge, that of concluding a comprehensive test-ban treaty in 1996.

I would also like to express our appreciation and admiration to your predecessor, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco, whose diplomatic skill, diligence and commitment inspired even the most reluctant among our membership to find common ground for progress on some of the most intractable issues confronted by the Conference. We hope that the expansion of the Conference will not be delayed any longer.

We are all aware that 1996 will be a critical turning-point in the endeavour to promote disarmament and to realize the quest for a nuclear-free world. The decision promoted last year by the nuclear Powers to extend the NPT indefinitely was the easy part of the crusade for non-proliferation. This year, we will face the moment of truth - when we shall need to decide whether we are prepared, collectively, to conquer the seductive lure of nuclear weapons and to construct a global security structure which does not rely on the unacceptable threat of the use of these weapons.

It is true that the danger of a global nuclear catastrophe has receded. The significant reductions in the arsenals of the two leading nuclear Powers under the START Treaties could open the way to a less dangerous nuclear balance. But it would be a fallacy to assume that the threat to peace posed by nuclear arms will disappear altogether. The fragile stability of "mutual assured destruction" has been replaced by the uncertainties of nuclear multipolarity. The uneasy equilibrium could be easily destroyed by precipitate action initiated by any one of the nuclear polarities. The only certain safeguard against the use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination.

This moment in history, when there are no fundamental or strategic confrontations between the nuclear Powers, offers a unique window of opportunity to ban nuclear weapons and to reach agreement on a specific process for the phased reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is, therefore, most disturbing that most of the nuclear-weapon States seem to be unprepared to consider the measures required to lead to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Some of them, while reducing their nuclear arsenals quantitatively, are upgrading them qualitatively. They cite unknown threats to justify retaining nuclear arms in operational readiness into the uncertain future. This posture reflects a political and strategic inertia which historians may consider as tragic for humankind. This embrace of nuclear weapons also denies the nuclear-weapon States the moral authority

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

to press for non-proliferation. Indeed, the possession of nuclear weapons by a select few States is the single most important factor impeding non-proliferation in certain regions of the world.

In the post-cold-war era, it is not exorbitant to expect the nuclear-weapon States to give a solemn and binding commitment not to use nuclear weapons. In the present circumstances, it should be possible to achieve a consensus to prohibit nuclear weapons and to agree on a programme for the progressive reduction and eventual elimination of these weapons.

Pakistan is strongly committed to the call of the leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement from Cartagena for the commencement of negotiations, as a matter of the highest priority in 1996, for the phased reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame. This call has been endorsed overwhelmingly by the United Nations General Assembly.

It is unfortunate that the consensus which exists within this body, at the moment, is only to resume the negotiations for the comprehensive test-ban treaty. Pakistan has consistently advocated the objective of a CTBT for the past 30 years. We are glad that those who opposed this treaty in the past are now its strongest proponents. But the treaty we build in this body must not be such that it will transform those who supported the CTBT in the past into States which are hesitant to join it.

For over 30 years, the CTBT has been envisaged as a measure to halt the qualitative development of nuclear weapons and to foreclose the possibility of their horizontal proliferation. Indeed, at the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the international community resolved to achieve a "cessation of nuclear-weapon testing by all States within the framework of an effective nuclear disarmament process".

Pakistan, together with other members of the Group of 21 and other like-minded States, will continue to press for such an effective nuclear disarmament process in this body. We hope that you will continue consultations designed to evolve a consensus to open negotiations on this issue of highest priority.

The Pakistan delegation has made and will continue to make a substantive contribution to the conclusion of a CTBT as soon as possible in 1996. While the advanced textual stage represents considerable progress in the CTBT negotiations, several important issues remain to be resolved before the negotiations can be successfully concluded.

The most fundamental outstanding issue is the "scope" of the treaty. By definition, the CTBT must ban all nuclear explosions comprehensively. No exceptions can be allowed for any reason. Moreover, a basic aim of the CTBT is to prevent the further qualitative development of nuclear weapons. Thus, the treaty must prohibit all activities which are inconsistent with this objective. For this reason, it needs to be established that concepts such as zero-yield and no-yield tests are compatible with the CTBT's fundamental aims.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

The CD has made considerable progress towards evolving an international monitoring system. It should not take too long to reach agreement on the architecture of the IMS, unless new problems arise. The endeavour, we feel, should be to achieve an effective verification regime. The conclusion of the CTBT should not founder on the shoals of an ambition to build a verification system which goes beyond the requirements of a CTBT.

In this context, we have serious reservations regarding some of the proposals relating to on-site inspections under the CTBT. OSI should be a rare occurrence in the CTBT verification regime. It should be a measure of last resort in resolving questions of compliance. The treaty must incorporate adequate safeguards against the abuse of OSIs. On-site inspections should be activated only by those events which are detected by the international monitoring system and not by so-called national technical means. Inspections must be first authorized by the Executive Council - in what is popularly called the "green light" procedure. And any OSIs that are authorized must be conducted in the least intrusive manner.

In the past few weeks, new doubts have arisen about the prospects of the CTBT and of a non-nuclear future for South Asia.

When the "Smiling Buddha" was exploded 20 years ago, Pakistan's response was to propose the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia - a concept repeatedly endorsed by the world community. Since then, nuclear-weapon-free zones have been created in Latin America, the South Pacific, Africa and perhaps soon in South-East Asia. In our region, unfortunately, there are, on the contrary, indications of preparations for another nuclear test. The son of Smiling Buddha could precipitate a nuclear arms race in South Asia. It will certainly subvert the possibility of concluding the CTBT in the near future. We look forward to categorical assurances that such a test is not being contemplated and will not be conducted.

I must add that my Government is equally concerned by recent statements that the serial production of nuclear-capable missiles has been commenced and that these missiles will soon be deployed across our border. This will create a hair-trigger security environment in a region where tensions already run high. It will oblige Pakistan to take appropriate measures to respond to the qualitatively more threatening security environment. We hope very much that everything will be done by the world community to prevent such a fateful step.

Speaking in Tokyo three days ago, Prime Minister Bhutto said: "Let Prime Minister Rao join me anywhere in the world to ensure that what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki will never happen in Lahore and Delhi". She asked Prime Minister Rao to join her in saying "No" to a nuclear future.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to Mr. John Holum, Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

Mr. HOLUM (United States of America): Mr. President, the United States congratulates you on assuming the Chair for these critical opening weeks. In your efforts and those of your colleagues, you will have the full cooperation of the United States delegation. Let me also thank those who oversaw the remarkable progress achieved last year in the test-ban negotiations: Ambassador Dembinski of Poland, Ambassador Norberg of Sweden, and Ambassador Ramaker of the Netherlands.

It is a great pleasure to return to the Conference on Disarmament, and again to convey a new message from the President of the United States. President Clinton's message reads as follows:

> "The hard work of the Conference on Disarmament has brought within reach a momentous achievement: a true-zero-yield comprehensive test-ban treaty that will endure for all time.
>
> "The international community has stated its determination to sign the CTBT during this, the fiftieth anniversary year of the United Nations. Now it is your responsibility to realize the vision of Prime Minister Nehru, Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, and many other world leaders over the past four decades.
>
> "A comprehensive test-ban treaty is vital to constrain both the spread and further development of nuclear weapons. And it will help fulfil our mutual pledges to renounce the nuclear arms race and move toward our ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear arms.
>
> "The Conference on Disarmament has made remarkable progress. Indeed, your progress in just two years has made it possible to conclude the treaty in the next few months. Now, urgent national political decisions must complement your painstaking work in Geneva, so that the Conference can forward a completed comprehensive test-ban treaty to the United Nations General Assembly by June.
>
> "I pledge the full and energetic support of the United States to conclude promptly a treaty so long sought and so long denied. Let us, now, take this historic step together."

President Clinton's message highlights the welcome reality that the decades-long quest to put an end to all nuclear explosions is nearing fruition. The reasons to complete and sign a comprehensive test ban this year - as endorsed last month in the United Nations General Assembly - are the same ones that have underpinned this quest from the beginning. The test ban is both a bulwark against the spread and further evolution of nuclear weapons capabilities, and a necessary step toward the larger goal of nuclear disarmament.

Nevertheless, I must acknowledge that the CTBT is at risk here in Geneva.

Last May in New York, nearly all the countries of the world decided to extend the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty indefinitely. All will

(Mr. Holum, United States)

remember the counsel of some that if the NPT were made permanent, then the nuclear-weapon States would lose interest in a comprehensive test ban. That was wrong. Lately, we have been hearing the argument that the test ban should not be negotiated because the NPT has been made permanent. That is just as wrong.

Today's threat to the test ban wears a benign face. It masquerades as even deeper devotion to arms control. The test ban, it has been suggested, should be linked to, if need be even sacrificed on the altar of, a time-bound framework for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

In response, I offer three propositions: First, a comprehensive test ban is itself a profoundly important new constraint, especially on the nuclear-weapon States. Second, the CTBT is an indispensable step if the ultimate elimination of nuclear arms is ever to be achieved. And third, holding one important goal hostage for another is a sure way to fail at both.

As to the first proposition, consider what the test ban represents in fact.

Remember that nearly all of the world's nations have separately committed themselves, in effect, not to test, as part of their broader commitment under the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty, or NPT. So the test ban is, fundamentally, a limitation only on countries that have nuclear weapons or hold open the nuclear option - and most particularly, a limitation on the five nuclear-weapon States.

It is incomprehensible how countries with no interest in nuclear weapons, and every interest in a safer planet, could find that an unappealing bargain. For we have come to Geneva to say, "join us in limiting our nuclear-weapons programmes".

Consider the extent of that limitation. It is true that the CTBT is not a back-door way to ban nuclear weapons. Indeed, a test ban has become a realistic goal today in part because changes in the international security environment have dramatically lessened the role of nuclear weapons. And we believe the far fewer remaining weapons can be maintained safely and reliably without nuclear explosions.

But the safe maintenance of existing weapons designs is a far cry from the confident development of new ones. The latter requires nuclear explosive tests, which the CTBT would preclude.

And no one should believe that such a constraint is without meaning, that the destructive potential of the atom has already been fully plumbed and exploited. Even the open literature points to a broad array of new weapons developments which, with testing, could serve future military programmes even in States that have carried out great numbers of nuclear tests.

Many would involve nuclear directed-energy weapons - ways to focus the release of energy with greater precision than is now possible, to enable

(Mr. Holum, United States)

military effects well beyond those available now. Without nuclear testing the nuclear-weapon States will not be able to pursue confidently such technologies as the nuclear-explosion-pumped X-ray laser, the so-called nuclear shotgun, enhanced electromagnetic pulse weapons, microwave weapons, and enhanced-radiation weapons. This is a real constraint - as is well known by all those who recall past discussions in this very room of enhanced-radiation weapons. The true-zero test ban will also place out of reach new "mini-nuke" and "micro-nuke" concepts - technologies designed to use nuclear explosive yields in small amounts.

By fending off such developments, the CTBT will help make nuclear war less likely, and sustain today's trend toward smaller nuclear arsenals with shrinking roles in national defences.

Of course, any State's nuclear weapons development programme seeks to use nuclear materials more efficiently - to increase yields, trim weights, reduce volumes, manipulate shapes. This quest for efficiency and flexibility is the most basic reason why countries might test. It is also a most potent catalyst for arms races. To avert it is the test ban's core value, and a profound one.

So, let there be no mistake - the CTBT will help impede the spread of nuclear weapons. But its great practical impact will also be for arms control - to end development of advanced new weapons and keep new military applications from emerging.

This basic reality also lays to rest the claim that the CTBT will somehow help codify a discriminatory regime, dividing the world between nuclear "haves" and "have-nots". In truth it is and will remain possible to make simple nuclear weapons without nuclear explosive testing. So the CTB's fundamental effect is less to preclude the acquisition of nuclear weapons as such, which the NPT addresses, than to constrain the advancement of nuclear weapons capabilities by any country.

And it will do so by treating all countries the same. To call the test ban discriminatory is to blame it for things wholly outside its purview. More important, to defeat or derail the test ban on such grounds would be to prescribe, as an answer to discrimination, the remedy of more, rather than fewer, nuclear-weapon States. Who in this Conference wants to endorse such a perverse cure as that?

My second proposition relates to the commitment affirmed at the NPT Review and Extension Conference to the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. In an uncertain world, the path to that goal is not yet clearly marked. What is clear, however, is that the ultimate goal will be reached only through realistic moves forward, as genuine security concerns permit, with each step building on those before it. And it should be obvious to all that the CTBT is the next attainable major step on that path.

Consider, as well, that the CTBT's contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament goes well beyond its immediate impact on countries. It is a contribution described in detail in countless statements in this body, in the

(Mr. Holum, United States)

United Nations, and from podiums in capitals throughout the world. It is a contribution voted for with enthusiasm by States large and small, West and East and Non-Aligned, for well over a quarter of a century, in resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, even when the United States was not in a position to join in support of those resolutions. It is a contribution foreshadowed by the preamble to the 1963 Treaty of Moscow, the partial or limited test-ban Treaty, to which over 115 of the global community's States are party, including every nuclear-capable State not party to the non-proliferation Treaty. It is a contribution reflected in the preamble of the NPT itself, which now counts as parties more than 180 States. It is a contribution adopted without objection in the decision documents of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

That contribution is, above all, the embodiment of the international community's political commitment to make good on its pledges, to seize the moment when it is finally at hand - and not to erect, at a very late date, new demands and new obstacles to taking a concrete step that all States recognize for both its intrinsic and its symbolic importance. Because our political commitment to disarmament is so bound up with this decision, I believe the practical reality is this: we will never achieve a world free of nuclear weapons unless we first achieve a world free of nuclear explosions.

So let's get to it.

The same logic applies to my third proposition - that the strategy of linkage is a strategy of failure. To reach that conclusion it is necessary only to contemplate honestly how further arms control efforts will fare if the test ban should fail - if we all must drag ourselves home from Geneva with nothing to show but recriminations and debaters' points for the next global conference.

Linkage here would be especially self-defeating. For it effectively would pit against one another aims that should reinforce one another. And in this case, it is also manifestly absurd. The answer to a world of too many nuclear weapons obviously is not a world of more nuclear explosions.

In short, the CTB can either bring an end to nuclear explosive testing, or it can be twisted into a misshapen and ineffectual pry-bar for other goals. But if we burden it with both tasks, it will fracture and do neither.

It would be not just deeply ironic, but tragic, if one of the international community's highest goals for 40 years suddenly lost its appeal just as the world was about to grasp it. The appeal of the unattainable may be the stuff of great love sonnets - but it is not sensible policy or diplomacy. We should not perversely veer away from the CTB because it is at last within reach.

Rather, this is a time for the world to keep its eye on the prize that stands immediately and attainably before it: a truly comprehensive ban on all nuclear-weapon test explosions, or any other nuclear explosions.

(Mr. Holum, United States)

We have a major, but surmountable, challenge ahead to meet the standard set for us by the global community.

United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/65 calls for conclusion of the negotiations so that the treaty can be opened for signature prior to the convening of the fifty-first General Assembly. If it is not completed by April, then the Conference must seriously take stock of how to make use of the remaining weeks prior to the end of the second part of this session. For it is imperative to report the complete text of the CTBT to the General Assembly by June, at the very latest, if we are to allow for its examination in capitals and then endorsement by the General Assembly that it be opened for signature by the agreed date.

Everyone is aware of the rolling text, and its more than 1,000 pairs of brackets. To resolve them promptly is indeed a daunting task. But it can be completed, or virtually so, by the end of the first part of this session. Why do I make such a bold statement? Because, in fact, there are far from 1,000 issues involved in the brackets. The basic issues are only a few, and their resolution - primarily a matter of political decisions - will allow the prompt removal or condensation of large tracts of disputed text.

But we must be keenly aware that this moment of unparalleled opportunity is fleeting, that the window of opportunity now open before us may be slammed shut as early as this summer. And we must act accordingly.

This means all of us must work in a businesslike spirit of accommodation and compromise. It demands that we not interpose new obstacles, but rather cut through the underbrush - abandoning placeholder language, stances taken with the intention of some day being bargained away, pet positions that do not command serious international support. The time has come to move to closure on common ground.

It is in this spirit that President Clinton withdrew last year the United States proposal for a 10-year withdrawal right. In the same spirit, in August, President Clinton, as you know, announced the United States commitment to a true-zero-yield CTBT - with no exceptions. We have been working hard to find common ground on other outstanding issues.

But time is short: we now have only 49 negotiating days left before the end of the first part of this session. So we must do all that is necessary - in capitals no less than here in Geneva - to ensure that every hour of every one of these 49 days is used to utmost effect.

Any slippage from this demanding schedule could be fatal to the treaty. And any delays will only expose the treaty to further risks. A treaty once more deferred may be a CTB denied.

So my overarching message is this: We are closer to success than many think. We can meet the deadline - if we turn our attention not to protecting options or preserving bargaining chips, but to completing this historic mission.

(Mr. Holum, United States)

The CTB has been the first item on the agenda of this body from its inaugural meetings. As our predecessors know all too well, the CTB's history is long and tortuous; and still it lacks a worthy conclusion.

But all the while two things have remained constant. Nuclear testing has continued. And the world's store of knowledge about how nuclear weapons work has continued to expand, with no end in sight.

At this moment of promise and peril, two potential races beckon us. One is the sprint to the finish of a truly comprehensive ban on all nuclear explosions. The other race is all too familiar - the arms competition that has brought into the world so many deadly weapons, at such cost in talent and treasure.

In the next 10 weeks, we can win the former race, and so help end the latter for all time.

And if the Conference on Disarmament cannot conclude its work, our failure will be a grave set-back not just for arms control, but for multilateral institutions and multilateral diplomacy more broadly. It will be ammunition for the cynics who claim that nothing truly important should be entrusted to such bodies.

The world's nuclear weapons have been tested in over 2,000 explosions at more than 20 locations around the globe. Their deadly efficacy is all too clear.

Now, here in this body, the workings of another way of resolving humanity's disagreements are on trial. Now it is we who are being tested.

We dare not fail. Our success will ring through ages to come.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Peru, Ambassador Urrutia, who will speak in his capacity as the Coordinator of the Group of 21.

Mr. URRUTIA (Peru) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, first of all allow me to take the floor on behalf of my own delegation in order to express our satisfaction at seeing you in the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament in this initial phase of the 1996 session. You may be sure that you can count on the full cooperation and support of my delegation in discharging your functions. My delegation also wishes to congratulate and thank your predecessor, Ambassador Benjelloun of Morocco, for the way in which he conducted our work in the last phase of 1995. We would also like to express our appreciation for the work done by the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, and in particular to Mr. Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations as well as Mr. Bensmail for his effective and constant efforts.

(Mr. Urrutia, Peru)

In my capacity as Coordinator I will now read out a statement by the Group of 21 on nuclear disarmament.

(continued in English)

"The G.21 reiterates its previous statement contained in document CD/1359 of 22 September 1995, and recalls that in the discussions within the CD it has consistently pressed for commencement of negotiations in the CD on nuclear disarmament. This objective has been accorded the highest priority by the international community.

"The G.21 regrets the refusal by certain member States of the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate on the issue of nuclear disarmament in the Conference, which is the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament issues.

"The G.21 States parties to the NPT are of the view that, following the adoption by the NPT Conference of its decision on 'Principles and objectives', an agreement must be reached among CD members for the inclusion on the CD agenda of an item on nuclear disarmament and the immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a nuclear disarmament treaty.

"The G.21 stresses that General Assembly resolution 50/70 P of 12 December 1995 calls on the CD to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations early in 1996 on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. The decisions and recommendations on nuclear disarmament contained in the final document of the Cartagena summit meeting of non-aligned countries underscores the same objective.

"The G.21 therefore calls for the immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in accordance with these decisions.

"The G.21 reiterates its resolve to work assiduously towards ridding our planet of the threat of nuclear weapons in the same manner as the international community has dealt with biological/toxin weapons and chemical weapons."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Peru for his statement on behalf of the Group of 21 and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Romania, Ambassador Neagu.

Mr. NEAGU (Romania): Mr. President, the first month in the work of the Conference on Disarmament's annual session is the most stimulating but also the most challenging period. The 1996 CD session indeed makes no exception to that rule. It is for me a distinct pleasure to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference and wish you every success in discharging the special responsibilities always entrusted to the first President of a

(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

CD annual session. Allow me also to express my deep appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco, who served as President in an exemplary manner during the last part of the 1995 session. Let me warmly salute Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail. We shall entirely rely on their professional, dedicated and efficient assistance. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to extend a cordial welcome to the new colleagues who have taken up their duties as representatives of their countries to the Conference - Ambassadors Caballero of Cuba, Tolle of Kenya and Abuah of Nigeria.

Released from the fetters of bipolarity and of the cold war, the international system regained its natural freedom of movement. The relinquishing of the politics of confrontation and the diminishing of the nuclear threat have triggered a vast and complex process of international détente by setting up a genuine framework for dialogue and cooperation among States. A new and promising political climate has emerged, generating conditions for important achievements in the field of disarmament and international security.

One of the most crucial dividends of this new era is undoubtedly the historic decision to make the NPT permanent. The Government of Romania is proud to be one of the contributors to that decision, which it considers as instrumental in underpinning the worldwide efforts to halt the spread of nuclear weapons while making the benefits of nuclear energy available to all mankind for peaceful purposes.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania stated before the fiftieth session of the United Nations, my country is confident that the extension of the NPT will make the negotiations on the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction also progress significantly and will lead to a permanent ban on any kind of nuclear tests, to enhanced security guarantees and to increased transparency in the field of armaments.

According to the programme of action embodied in the "Principles and objective for nuclear disarmament", 1996 is expected to be the year of completing the CTBT, a long-sought objective in the process of arms control and disarmament. Much, and encouraging, progress has been achieved in important areas of negotiations on the "rolling text" during the 1995 session of the CD. Yet crucial issues remain to be settled, such as the scope of the treaty and basic obligations, the final architecture of the international monitoring system, on-site verification activities and the future CTBT organization.

At a stage when our negotiations are about to enter the decisive phase on all relevant aspects, Romania wishes to reiterate its firm stand for a universal and effectively verifiable comprehensive test-ban treaty. We hold that the CTBT must ban all nuclear tests, everywhere and forever, and, in this

(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

respect, we welcome the decisions taken by France, the United States and the United Kingdom to support the "zero-yield" test ban as a major breakthrough in moving towards agreement on the scope article.

For a CTBT to be credible and to attract the adherence of all States, it should be provided with a verification mechanism able to accurately deter suspect events and possible non-compliance. Romania endorses the option for a robust but cost-effective international system providing for collection of data through seismic, hydroacoustic, radionuclide and infrasound techniques, prompt, mandatory on-site inspections as well as a consultation and clarification procedure and "associated measures" for the exchange of information that could help resolve ambiguities. Likewise, we see the CTBT implementing body as separate but co-located with IAEA in Vienna, relatively small in size and personnel, requiring the least possible financial resources from contributing member States and enjoying, at the same time, a sound functional relationship with the Agency.

The CD has no more important task in 1996 than completing the CTBT. Romania shares the view that no effort should be spared in order to finalize the text of the treaty by the first part of this session. As underlined by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in his message to the Conference, "nothing must be allowed to deter this objective". Let me take this opportunity to express our highest appreciation for the fruitful work that has been done by the former Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, my neighbour Ambassador Ludwik Dembinski of Poland. At the same time, I sincerely hope that this work will be continued in the framework of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, which has to be re-established with no further delay, so that we could get down to negotiations immediately in order to solve the outstanding problems ahead of us.

While giving priority to the NTB negotiations, the Romanian delegation is confident that the time ahead could also be used for deepening the debate and narrowing the gap on other important issues on our agenda, many of them closely related to a CTBT.

A multilateral, effectively verifiable convention to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices cannot but complement the nuclear test-ban regime by capping the amount of fissile material available for explosive military purposes not only in nuclear-weapons States, but also in those States which currently have unsafeguarded enrichment or reprocessing plants. It will contribute to ensuring the conditions under which the process of nuclear disarmament can broaden, constrain the opportunities for vertical proliferation and help prevent any future resumption of the nuclear arms race.

The year 1995 marked an encouraging development in this field because for the first time the CD has agreed to establish a "cut-off" ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate. We believe that the consensus on the important initiative on banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons

(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

and other nuclear explosive devices must be preserved and brought to fruition. The difficulties in tackling the "fiss-ban" question, such as the scope of the convention, how to avoid precluding the production of fissile material for peaceful or non-prescribed purposes, and the setting up of an efficient and objective verification mechanism, should not impede but rather stimulate our endeavours to come to mutually accepted solutions.

The issue of security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States also registered significant progress in 1995. The declarations issued by each of the five nuclear Powers and Security Council resolution 984, adopted by consensus, largely responded to the legitimate aspirations of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. At the same time, the NPT Conference agreed that further steps in this area should be considered, including the conclusion of "an internationally legally binding instrument".

This completely coincides with Romania's own position, and we hope that conditions will be created to further explore this question.

While giving the highest priority to various aspects of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, the CD should not neglect conventional armaments, a scourge inextricably linked with all the armed conflicts which have erupted on Earth during the last five decades.

My delegation deplores the fact that the useful work done in the Ad Hoc Committee on TIA has been suspended in 1995. And we hope that, in resuming the 1996 session, the CD will be able to establish from the very beginning the respective subsidiary body.

Measures to curb the excessive production, development and build-up of such weapons need to be urgently addressed and adopted. Among these measures, ensuring transparency and self-restraint in arms transfers is of paramount importance. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms thus constitutes a significant step forward in the promotion of transparency in military matters, while proving itself to be a viable instrument capable of attracting the widest possible participation. Current proposals that already participating States should encourage and assist others to adhere, through a kind of "partnership approach", are most commendable in order to attain the universality of the Register. Romania also supports the concept of regional and subregional variants of the Register and applauds the United Nations Centre for Disarmament Affairs for including this option in its programme aiming at promoting the merits of transparency through the Register.

In the same spirit, Romania associated itself with the statement presented on behalf of the European Union at the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, that it is necessary for all States to adopt responsible policies in matters relating to transfers of conventional weapons. While adopting such a policy through internal regulations and mechanisms, my country has long been promoting the goals of openness and transparency in arms transfers within the CD, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and other

(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

appropriate forums. In June 1993 Romania submitted at the CD the proposal for a "Code of conduct for international transfers of conventional weapons" aiming at establishing a universal and non-discriminatory set of principles and criteria to promote openness, mutual respect for each other's security interests and, on that basis, voluntary restraint and responsibility in this field.

We continue to feel that it is in the interest of all countries, big or small, and especially in the interest of smaller, developing ones, faced with problems of chaotic, frequently illegal, ever-growing conventional arms that, as the Secretary-General of the United Nations put it, kill hundreds of thousands of innocent people, to establish such a code of conduct.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Romania for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

If not, I shall now suspend this plenary meeting and, as I announced earlier, I shall convene immediately an informal meeting open to the members of the Conference only - I repeat, open to the members of the Conference only - to consider the draft agenda for the 1996 session of the Conference (contained in CD/WP.469), the draft decision on the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban (contained in CD/WP.470), the remarks I intend to make following the consideration of these two draft decisions, as well as the requests for participation by non-member States in the work of the Conference, as contained in document CD/WP.468.

The meeting was suspended at 11.45 a.m. and resumed at 12.45 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 721st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

I should like to take up for decision the draft agenda of the Conference for its 1996 session as contained in document CD/WP.469. May I consider that the Conference adopts this agenda?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Peru has asked for the floor, on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. URRUTIA (Peru) (translated from Spanish): The Group of 21 considers that the agenda just adopted for the 1996 session is a provisional one until such time as the Special Coordinator of the Conference for the review of the future agenda submits his report on the consultations he has held on this subject.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Peru for his statement made on behalf of the Group of 21.

(The President)

With respect to the last paragraph of the document we have just adopted, I should like to stress that both myself and my successors will spare no effort to ensure that the decision taken last year by the Conference in document CD/1356 is implemented at the earliest possible date.

I should now like to turn to the draft decision on the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, as contained in document CD/WP.470. May I take it that the Conference decides to adopt this decision?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Jaap Ramaker of the Netherlands on his appointment as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and wish him every success in his endeavours.

With respect to the other items on the agenda, I understand that there is consensus to appoint a Special Coordinator to consult on the review of the future agenda of the Conference as well as on organizational arrangements to deal with the following issues: the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; prevention of an arms race in outer space; and transparency in armaments. I propose to appoint Ambassador Hocine Meghlaoui of Algeria as Special Coordinator on these issues. May I take it that this proposal is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Allow me to congratulate Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria on his appointment as Special Coordinator and wish him every success in his efforts.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, one group reiterated the importance it attached to this issue and requested that an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament be established immediately. This view was shared by another delegation. Some delegations from another group expressed willingness to agree to the appointment of a Special Coordinator to deal with the issue of nuclear disarmament. Another group supported the idea that the President of the Conference, or a Special Coordinator to be appointed by him, would consult on how to address all the other items on the agenda, including nuclear disarmament. I intend to conduct intensive consultations with a view to developing a basis for consensus on this issue and to report to the Conference at the earliest opportunity.

Finally, I wish to invite you to consider the requests for participation in our work during the 1996 session from States not members of the Conference. The secretariat has so far received requests from a total of 49 States. Of these 49, we have 23 States listed in the CD decision (CD/1356) of

(The President)

21 September 1995. May I take it that we accept their application for participation in the work of the CD as non-member States, in accordance with the rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: May I assume that the remaining 26 States who have also applied for participation in the work of the CD as non-member States, as contained in CD/WP.468, namely Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Ghana, Greece, the Holy See, Iceland, Ireland, Jordan, Kuwait, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Nicaragua, Oman, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania are also acceptable in accordance with the rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I thank all delegations for the spirit of compromise and flexibility which allowed us to embark on our substantive work without delay.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? Morocco has asked for the floor, and after Morocco, Ambassador Ramaker.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco): Thank you, Mr. President. I will have another occasion to formally congratulate you and to thank everybody for the kind words addressed to me. Today, I wanted simply to make a few remarks as outgoing President of this Conference on the issue of expansion of the membership of the Conference.

Basically, I want to report on what I promised I would do during the inter-sessional period. You will remember that, before taking the decision (CD/1356) on 21 September 1995, I took it upon myself to report to the CD on the issue of expansion of membership, including on the remaining 12 applications. Unfortunately, and this is why I am taking the floor today, I was not able to conduct proper consultations on this particular subject, for reasons beyond my control. Basically, the members of the CD during this period were in New York, and I was not able to conduct consultations on this subject. I wanted those States outside the Group of 23 - which means all the other States who are interested in becoming members of the CD - to know that we did not forget about this issue and that I remain, as representative of Morocco, committed to seeing to it that this question is tackled by this President, and the next ones. I would like to congratulate our President for the commitment that he made in his statement today on this subject, and also for furthering the decision that was taken in September, that is the decision on the 23 States that are "members-to-be", and this status of "members-to-be" should not be a permanent status but really a transitory one. And the sooner the better. And my message and my commitment to them in this room is that we should definitely not try to forget about them, by saying that we took a decision in September but we will wait until next September to do something about it, just to prepare for the next session of the General Assembly. I think that we should definitely - and I am placing this on record - that we

(Mr. Benjelloun-Touimi, Morocco)

should look into ways and means to be able to implement the second decision, because without the second decision, the first one is meaningless, and it would even become a liability for those countries and for the Conference. So I would simply like to appeal to all members of the CD to make an extra effort to deal with the issue, not only of the 23 "members-to-be" of the Conference - and to try to start integrating them into our process of negotiations and consultations - but also to deal with the other 12 countries that are interested in becoming members of the Conference. We should address the right questions, starting with the one I have in mind, which is: "How many should we be in the CD to be able to negotiate effectively?" We have to answer that question before we can go any further, and I think we should do it as soon as possible. I am aware that there are political realities and that things cannot be resolved within a few days, but I think that if we put our will to it, we will be able to solve it to the benefit of the Conference as well as for the entire international community. We are not going to be able to negotiate universal agreements, treaties and conventions if we do not have a representative CD. And the membership of the CD today does not represent the international community properly and we definitely have to do something about it. This is basically my message, as a former President of the Conference, and I wanted to be transparent and to tell those to whom I made a commitment to do my best for them, but to whom I was unfortunately not able to deliver. I wanted them to know why and assure them that we are still committed to this end.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Benjelloun for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Ambassador Meghlaoui.

Mr. MEGHLAOUI (Algeria) (translated from French): Mr. President, I am delighted to join those who have congratulated you on taking up the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You are taking the Chair at the initial stage of the 1996 session, which I hope will be a historic session in the full sense of the term. You have thus the special responsibility of preparing the Conference for its work and getting it off to a good start. That is a major challenge which you have already taken up to a great extent. We have all been able to appreciate your diplomatic qualities, your patience, your innate sense of compromise, in the consultations before the official opening of this session. You can be assured of the full support of the Algerian delegation. It will do all it possibly can to help you in carrying out your task. I would also like to extend my congratulations to your predecessor, Ambassador Benjelloun of Morocco, for his efforts during the final stage of the 1995 session. Lastly, I would like to welcome our new colleagues from Cuba, Kenya and Nigeria. I wish to assure them of full cooperation from the Algerian delegation.

The Conference on Disarmament has just decided to give me the task of conducting consultations on the future agenda of the CD, and you were the first to congratulate me, for which many thanks. It is with great humility that I accept this responsibility, whose significance I, and indeed all of us, fully appreciate. I am sure that everyone here is aware of the need to review

(Mr. Meghlaoui, Algeria)

the agenda, and everyone is also aware of the complexity of that task, as I am sure that I will be able to count on assistance from each delegation to carry out the mandate that the CD has decided to entrust to me. The sense of compromise which prevailed at the initial part of this session gives grounds for optimism. Let us hope that it will last, in the interest of all.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Meghlaoui for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

The secretariat, at my request, has prepared a tentative timetable of meetings for the current week. As you may see, it is envisaged that the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban will take place this afternoon at 3 p.m. in this room. This timetable was prepared in consultation with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, Ambassador Ramaker of the Netherlands. It is merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. May I take it that the Conference decides to adopt this timetable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Now I give the floor to Ambassador Ramaker of the Netherlands.

Mr. RAMAKER (Netherlands): First of all, Mr. President, thank you for your kind words on my appointment as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. My delegation would hope to be able, on another occasion, to congratulate you in a more formal manner on the outstanding way in which you have prepared the session of the Conference this year and for the way you have guided us through our work which has enabled the Conference to so promptly re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. I would simply like to draw the attention of delegations at this moment to what you just said, to the informal paper that was circulated by the secretariat containing a timetable of meetings for this week. It is, indeed, my intention to call a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban this afternoon at 3 p.m., and I would like on that occasion to share with delegations, first of all, the general approach that the Chair intends to take with regard to its work in the coming period of negotiations and, secondly, also to give some more details, in particular, on how we see the rest of this week go on, so that delegations have an idea of what it is we can do in the time that is available to us this week and in the time slots that are mentioned in the informal paper.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Ramaker for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

As our agenda for today is exhausted - like your President - I intend now to adjourn this meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday, 25 January at 10 a.m. sharp.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.